

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

SECSTATE WASHDC 8211

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS GENEVA 4740

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ILO, SF, NI

SUBJ: NIGERIAN LABOR COMMISSIONER ATTACKS APARTHEID; DEFENDS

NIGERIAN TRADE UNION POLICY AT ILO

1. SUMMARY: NIGERIAN LABOR COMMISSIONER ADEFOPE ATTACKED APARTHEID AND CALLED FOR BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICA IN ADDRESS BEFORE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE. OTHER MAJOR FOCUS WAS DEFENSE OF FMG POLICY TOWARD NIGERIAN TRADE UNIONS. HE ALSO URGED REFORM OF ILO STRUCTURE TO KEEP ORGANIZATION INTACT AND BRING IT INTO LINE WITH QUOTE PRESENT REALITIES UNQUOTE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN JUNE 9 ADDRESS BEFORE PLENARY SESSION OF 63RD INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE, NIGERIAN LABOR COMMISSIONER ADEFOPE ATTACKED APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA AND LABOR DISCRIMINATION IN NAMIBIA. WHILE NOTING RECENT PUBLICIZING BY ILO OF COMMITMENT FOR SUPPORT OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN FREEDOM MOVEMENTS, ADEFOPE OBSERVED PAST ILO ACTIONS LARGELY IN THE FORM OF REPORTS. SAID DAY OF PLATITUDES IS PAST IN ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA, AZANIA.

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URGED WORKERS TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE. ADEFOPE ALSO CHARGED THAT PRESENT SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIMES EXIST BECAUSE OF PAST SOLID BACKING OF NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS AND MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. HOWEVER, HE NOTED PRESENT INDICATIONS OF SERIOUS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO FACE THE CHALLENGES POSED BY SYSTEMATIC AND CALCULATED EXPLOITATION OF

SOUTHERN AFRICA WORKERS.

3. ADEFOPE'S SECOND MAJOR THEME WAS DEFENSE OF FMG POLICY TOWARD NIGERIAN TRADE UNIONS. SAID HE HAD HEARD IN GENEVA OF MOVES FROM CERTAIN QUARTERS FOR ACTIONS URGING TOLERATION OF EXISTENCE OF DUBIOUS AND DISCREDITED NIGERIAN TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS. COMMISSIONER SAID FMG WOULD NOT DO THIS. COMMISSIONER ALLEGED IT IS NOT PRACTICAL TO HAVE SINGLE STANDARD OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTRIES. PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REQUIRE STANDARDS THAT ARE BOTH PRACTICAL AND IDEALISTIC. ADEFOPE ADDED THAT LABOR STANDARDS CAN QUOTE UNWITTINGLY PROVIDE A ROOSTING GROUND FOR OPPORTUNISTS AND OTHER REACTIONARY ELEMENTS TO EXPLOIT THEIR FELLOW MEN. UNQUOTE. SAID THAT BITTER NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE OF PAST YEAR SHOWS THERE IS EVIDENT DANGER THAT CERTAIN STANDARDS CAN PROVIDE ALIBI FOR EXPLOITATION OF DIS-ADVANTAGED. ADEFOPE CLAIMED NIGERIA HAS EMBARKED UPON PROGRAM WHICH WILL ASSURE EMERGENCE OF BONA FIDE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS WHICH WILL CATER TO NEEDS OF WORKERS AND COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT IN WELFARE PROJECTS. SAID FMG WILL NOT TOLERATE INDISCIPLINE AND IS COMMITTED TO NEW TRADE UNION STRUCTURE WHICH WILL QUOTE ENSURE ELECTION OF TRADE UNION LEADERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CODE OF CONDUCT CONSISTENT WITH GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL NATIONAL PROGRAM OF ENFORCING DISCIPLINE IN ALL FACETS OF PUBLIC LIFE. UNQUOTE.

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4. OTHER AREAS TOUCHED BY ADEFOPE INCLUDED THE ROLE OF ILO IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. HE SAID QUALITY OF EXPERTISE AND SENSITIVITY TO CONDITIONS IN RECIPIENT COUNTRY OFTEN DOUBTFUL. ALSO CALLED FOR MORE EMPHASIS ON WORKER AND EMPLOYER EDUCATION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NEW HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. COMMISSIONER CONCLUDED BY STATING VITAL INTERESTS LIE IN KEEPING ILO INTACT. ONGOING EXERCISE OF REFORM OF STRUCTURE OF ILO TO BRING IT INTO LINE WITH PRESENT REALITIES SHOULD BE PURSUED IF ILO IS TO BE VIRILE AND INDISPENSABLE ORGANIZATION. FULL TEXT POUCHED LAGOS AND DEPARTMENT (AF).

5. COMMENT: ADVOCACY OF REFORM OF STRUCTURE REFLECTS AS MUCH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' DESIRE TO ELIMINATE NON-ELECTIVE SEATS ON ILO GOVERNING BODY AND OTHER PERCEIVED PRIVILEGES OF INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS AS SUPPORT FOR US EFFORTS TO REFORM ORGANIZATION.SORENSEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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